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SOURCE Newspapers as indicated.

ORDER MOBILIZATION OF LABORERS FOR RR CONSTRUCTION:
EDITORIAL HITS PEOPLE'S APATHY, NONCOOPERATION

[Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources]

The Sian News Bureau reported on 12 December 1950 (1) that the Northwest Military and Administrative Committee had ordered the mobilization of laborers, for construction work on the extension of the Lung-Hai Railway, by the Shensi Provincial government, the governments of Ch'ang-an Hsien, the Special Administrative Districts of Hsien-yang, Pao-chi, Shang-lo, Wei-nan, and Sui-te in Shensi, the Kansu Provincial government, the Special Administrative Districts of T'ien-shui and Ting-hsi in Kansu, and by all their subsidiary governments. The next of the order follows:

"For the purposes of exploiting the abundant resources of the Northwest, developing industry, improving the economic life of the people, and strengthening and expanding the national defense, the construction of the Northwest railway trunk line has become an immediate task of pressing importance. For this reason, the Northwest Enabling Act of 1951 for the Mobilization of Civilian Labor for Railway Construction is hereby enacted and promulgated. All levels of the People's government are ordered to give serious study to the order, make careful arrangements for its implementation, dispatch competent cadres to the towns and villages of the areas concerned for the mobilization and organization of the masses, and from time to time to report on conditions and progress, to the end that the order may be put into complete and effective execution."

In a lengthy discussion of the importance of early completion of the Lung-Hai Railway, the main trunk line of the Northwest, an editorial in the Sian Ch'un-chung Jih-pao on 15 December 1950 (1) discussed the issuance of the above order and severely criticized the people of the region for their apathy and noncooperation in the project. It stated that, despite the fact that the Central People's government has done its utmost by supplying funds,

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engineers, materials, and considerable military labor, the laborers of the region have not come forward in large numbers to carry out the construction, and as a result, much too slow progress has been made on the construction project.

The editorial continued that this situation indicates a lack of understanding of the political and economic significance of this railway by the regional and local government cadres as well as by the people. It went on to say that the securing of the needed 30,000 workers should not be a difficult undertaking, for it is only a small proportion of the number of laborers available in the Northwest. The CCP it added has had plenty of experience in mobilizing and organizing large bodies of men for services, and although the building of a railroad is more difficult than destroying one, even the comparatively backward people of the Northwest would soon learn how to do it.

The editorial stressed that, in soliciting the aid of the people, although it was proper to point out the economic benefits that would accrue to the people as well as to the country as a whole, this should not be the sole basis for appeal, lest the workers make selfish demands for high wages and distribution of large units of land. It advised the cadres to bear in mind that important reasons for the building of this railroad on to Lan-chou and beyond are to make the Northwest more available as a hinterland base for national defense, and to link China with its powerful and friendly neighbor, the USSR.

In conclusion, the editorial pointed out to the cadres that this mobilization implies immense potentialities for political education in Communist ideology and methods of organization and work; it is hoped that, when their work is finished, the laborers will return home as active leaders in various kinds of political reform and social advance.

A Hong Kong dispatch of 25 February 1951 (2) reports that a very reliable and influential source at Taipeh definitely stated that the Chinese Communists on the mainland are now engaged in forcibly conscripting a large number of laborers. Part of them are now being moved to the Southwest to work on the construction of what was formerly called the Stilwell Road; the others are being transported to the Northwest to build the proposed railway from Lan-chou, Kansu, across Sinkiang, to the Sino-Soviet border, where it is to be connected with the Turk-Sib Railway in USSR territory. This railway is to extend more than 4,000 kilometers, passing through numerous large cities such as Hsi-an (Sian) in Shensi, Lan-chou in Kansu, Ti-hua and T'ach'eng in Sinkiang. These projects will require the work of 200,000-300,000 slave laborers. The objectives are twofold: (a) to fulfill an obligation, undertaken by China in an earlier Sino-Soviet convention, to build the Northwest railway and thus provide a way of escape in the event of Chinese Communist military reverses; (b) construction of the Stilwell Road to facilitate attacks on Burma and India.

SOURCES

1. Sian, Ch'un-chung Jih-pao, 15 Dec 50
2. Hong Kong, Kung-shang Jih-pao, 26 Feb 51

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